

applicants who were suspected of being ISI agents/terrorists. Investigations have been carried out and action taken by the Government *inter alia* includes arrest of six passport office employees, three police personnel, two postal employees and nineteen other people.

(d) Does not arise.

Recognition of India as Regional Superpower

2926. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA:

SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 751 given in the Rajya Sabha on 1st March, 2001 and state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the new Government of USA has also gone on record to State that India should be recognised as a regional superpower; and

(b) if so, what has been Government's response on this important statement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI KRISHNAMRAJU): (a) In his statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 17th January 2001, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell said, "We must deal more wisely with the world's largest democracy. Soon to be the most populous country in the world, India has the potential to help keep peace in the vast Indian Ocean area and its periphery".

(b) Government has consistently maintained that India has vital stake in, and a shared responsibility for, the maintenance of peace and stability in the region. In the Vision Statement issued in New Delhi in March 2000, the two sides agreed to engage in regular consultations on, and work together and with others for, strategic stability in Asia and beyond. Government is engaged in bilateral dialogue with several countries, including

[22 March, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

with the United States, to strengthen mutual understanding on security issues.

Pakistan's stand on India's cease-fire

2927. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Pakistan had denounced India's extension of the Kashmir cease-fire by three months;

(b) if so, whether Government are also aware that Pakistan has stated that it was 'yet another attempt to mislead the world opinion';

(c) if so, whether Pakistan had urged India to realise the futility of its efforts to impose a military solution on Kashmir; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI KRISHNAMRAJU): (a) to (d) The State of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of the Indian Union, a part of the territory of the State is under the forcible and illegal occupation of Pakistan. It is obvious that Pakistan has no role whatsoever to play in matters pertaining to the internal affairs of India.

On 22nd February 2001, for the third time, Government announced the extension of the period of non-initiation of combat operations against militants in Jammu and Kashmir. Government have also indicated their willingness to talk to all those who abjure violence. It has been made amply clear that this initiative is only for those who wish to benefit from it. Security forces have been given clear instructions to act decisively against any one who wishes to sabotage the prospects of peace in the State, or seeks to injure any of our citizens. The people of Jammu and Kashmir have continued to warmly welcome Government's unilateral initiatives, which serve to strengthen the constituency of peace in the State.

Government are aware that Pakistan continues to make efforts to sabotage the prospects of peace in Jammu and Kashmir through